Designation: D 4385 – 02

Standard Practice for Classifying Visual Defects in Thermosetting Reinforced Plastic Pultruded Products[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 4385; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope*

1.1 This practice covers acceptance criteria for visual acceptance of thermosetting reinforced plastic pultruded rods, bars, shapes, and sheets.

1.2 This practice presents definitions of possible defects to serve as a guide for contracts, drawings, product specifications, and final inspection.

1.3 This practice also categorizes different inspection requirements for three grades of product quality.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

NOTE 1—There is no similar or equivalent ISO standard.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:* [2]

D 3647 Practice for Classifying Reinforced Plastic Pultruded Shapes According to Composition

D 3917 Specification for Dimensional Tolerance of Thermosetting Glass-Reinforced Plastic Pultruded Shapes

3. Acceptance Criteria

3.1 The method and frequency of sampling and the quality level shall be agreed upon between the purchaser and the seller.

3.2 *Dimensions and Tolerances*—Pultruded shapes shall be inspected for conformance with dimensions and tolerances specified on the product drawing. Products with any dimensions exceeding the specified limits shall be rejected.

3.3 *Punchability*—Products 5 mm thick or thinner, having Reinforcement Material G and Reinforcement Type M in accordance with Practice D 3647, shall be capable of being punched, drilled, and riveted without causing splitting or delamination when good commercial practices are employed (for example, proper backup, adequate hole spacing, etc.).

3.4 *Critical Areas*—Areas in which the presence of imperfections is considered to be detrimental to the proper function of the part shall be designated as critical areas. The areas of a product that are critical structurally, aerodynamically, electrically, or for some other purpose shall be uniform and in accordance with the quality levels of Table 1 as stated on the product drawing. Critical areas may be designated on the product drawing by one of the following methods:

3.4.1 Encircle critical areas,

3.4.2 Cross-hatch areas to designate areas of various levels, or

3.4.3 Word description.

3.5 *Allowable Defects*—Defects that by nature, number, or frequency of occurrence do not affect the serviceability of the product. These allowable defects shall be fully described as to type, size, number, extent allowed, and spacing. The appropriate acceptance level (see Table 1) for defects in these areas must be specified. Defects in excess of those listed as allowable in the product specifications, drawings, or contracts for the product shall be cause for rejection.

3.6 *Acceptable Defects*—Unless otherwise specified, the following defects shall be acceptable in all instances:

3.6.1 *Shrink-Mark*—A dimple-like depression on the surface of a pultruded shape where it has retracted from the pultrusion die, and which has well-rounded edges. A shrink-mark generally occurs on one surface of a part where there is a boss, flange, rib, or other heavy section on the opposite surface. The shrink-mark may be caused by the difference in total shrinkage when there is a sudden change in section along the surface of the part.

3.6.2 *Resin Voids*—Applicable to a number of mat- and fabric-type reinforcement systems, particularly continuous strand mat used without a surfacing material or woven fabrics. The resin voids appear as multiple surface interruptions that conform to the pattern of the cloth weave or the continuous strand mat fiber distribution. This is usually due to an insufficient flow or shrinkage of the resin that fails to fill all of the interstices of the fabric or mat reinforcement. These defects

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[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

***A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.**

occur only on the surface layer of resin in contact with the pultrusion die or mold.

3.6.2.1 Pultrusions intended for chemical corrosion environments with pH below 5, or over 9, or for immersion applications, require a synthetic surface veil to ensure adequate resin coverage. Any resin voids shall be repaired.

3.7 *Repairable Defects*—Repairable defects are those that can be repaired without affecting the serviceability of the product unless otherwise specifically prohibited on product specifications, drawings, or contracts. The specific repairable defects include blister, chips, die-parting line, gouges, grooving, intermittent disfigurement, scale, scuffing, sluffing, stop mark, wire brush surface, and resin voids (see 3.6.2). The repaired product must conform to the limits of Table 1. Other defects may be repaired by mutual consent of the customer and the pultruder. Methods of repair shall be agreed upon between the purchaser and the seller and shall be fully described by the product specification, drawings, or contracts.

4. Acceptance Levels

4.1 *Visual Inspection*—Each sample selected in accordance with 3.1 shall be checked visually without the aid of magnification. Defects shall be classified as to type and level, as shown in Table 1. The quality level shall be determined by reference to the product specification or drawing for the applicable acceptance level for allowable defects. The inspection shall be concerned with those defects described by the product specifications, drawings, or contracts for the pultruded products. If none of these first three levels (Levels I, II, or III) is considered applicable, the level shall be Level IV, and allowable defects must be specified on the product specification or drawing including the criteria for acceptance. Any excess of defects, as specified under the required level, shall be cause for rejection. Unless otherwise specified, dimensions are surface dimensions.

4.2 *Acceptance Level I*—Presence of any defects in excess of those listed in Table 1, Level I, shall be cause for rejection.

4.3 *Acceptance Level II*—Presence of defects in excess of those listed in Table 1, Level II, shall be cause for rejection, if defect is not repairable.

4.4 *Acceptance Level III*—Presence of defects in excess of those listed in Table 1, Level III, shall be cause for rejection, if defect is not repairable.

4.5 *Acceptance Level IV*—Any defect not specifically defined by size or shape in Levels I, II, or III that falls into a category between Levels I, II, and III or beyond Level III and is considered acceptable, shall be designated as Level IV and shall be specified on the product specification or drawing. Any such defect shall be fully described as to size, shape, number, extend, and spacing on the product drawing, product specification, or contracts for the products.

5. Keywords

5.1 pultrusion; structural shapes; visual

TABLE 1 Acceptance Criteria

Name	Definition	Visual Acceptance Levels		
		Level I	Level II	Level III
Black Marking	Black smudges on the surface of the pultruded product that cannot be removed by cleaning, scrubbing, or wiping with solvent. NOTE—Black marking results from excessive pressures in the die when the pultrusion is rubbing against soft or unchromed die surfaces.	None	Permitted if not over 12 mm wide or 20 cm long or more than 4 marks per 3 m of length.	Permitted if not over 12 mm
Blister	A rounded elevation of the pultruded surface with boundaries that may be more or less sharply defined. NOTE—The rounded elevation somewhat resembles in shape a blister on the surface of human skin. Blisters may exist within the pultrusion as a hollow delaminated area (gas-filled) under a raised portion of the surface.	None	Permitted if formed between surfacing layer and balance of laminate, width is not greater than 75 % of surface width (but 10 cm max) and length is not over 15 cm. No more than 1 per 3 m of length. Product must meet test requirements and not exceed dimensional tolerances. Repair if limits exceeded.	Permitted if formed between surfacing layer and balance of laminate, width is no greater than 80 % of surface width (but 13 cm max) and length is not over 20 cm. No more than 2 per 3 m of length.
Blooming, Fiber (Fiber Show)	A pultrusion surface condition exhibiting a fiber prominence or fiber show that usually has a white or bleached color and a sparkling appearance. NOTE—The surface generally feels rough when touched by the fingers and is of superficial thickness easily removed by buffing or light sanding.	None	Permitted for rod and bar with all roving reinforcement. None permitted for a mat/roving profile unless the profile contains no surfacing veil by its specification.	
Blooming, Undercure	A dull and bleached surface color that is evident in pultruded material not exposed to the weather.	None	None	None
Burn	A discoloration, distortion, or destruction of the pultruded surface as a result of thermal decomposition.	None	None	None

TABLE 1 *Continued*

Name	Definition	Visual Acceptance Levels		
		Level I	Level II	Level III
Chips (Gouges)	Minor damage to the pultruded surface that removes material but does not cause a crack or craze.	None	Not over 6 mm long or wide or 0.64 mm deep. Not more than 4 per 3 m of length. Repair if limits exceeded.	Not over 10 mm wide or long or 0.64 mm deep. Not more than 5 per 3 m of length. Repair if limits exceeded.
Crack	A visual separation that occurs internally or penetrates down from the pultruded surface to the equivalent of one full ply or more reinforcement.	None	None	None
Crater	A small, shallow pultrusion surface imperfection.	None	Not over 1 mm in diameter and 0.64 mm deep. Maximum of 5 per 64.5 cm of area and no more than 1 such area per 0.3 m of product. Not permitted in same area of unrepaired chips and gouges.	Not over 1.5 mm in diameter and 0.76 mm deep. Maximum of 5 per 64.5 cm area and no more than one such area per 0.3 m.
Craze	Multiple fine separation cracks at the pultruded surface not penetrating into the reinforcement nor to the equivalent depth of one ply of reinforcement. NOTE—This condition is usually due to resin shrinkage during cure in resin-rich areas.	None	Not over 9 mm long or 0.4 mm wide, not more than 12 per 3 m of length.	Not over 9 mm long or 0.4 mm wide, continuous crazing permitted.
Delamination	The separation of two or more layers or plies of reinforcing material within a pultrusion.	None	None	None
Die Parting Line	A lengthwise flash or depression on the surface of a pultruded plastic part. NOTE—The die-parting line is associated with the area where separate pieces of the die join together to form the cavity.		The line projection caused by the die-parting line shall not extend past the product's surface by more than 0.20 mm for shapes less than 3.1 cm wide and 0.3 mm for shapes greater than 3.1 cm wide. It shall not create a sharp feeling or have loose fibers. Repair if limits exceeded.	The line projection caused by the die parting line shall not extend past the product's surface by more than 0.30 mm. It shall not create a sharp feeling or have loose fibers. Repair if limits are exceeded.
Discoloration	A streak of other pattern on the surface that causes a noticeable change of color from the rest of the pultruded surface.	None	Spots of any color not over 12 mm in diameter or 4 per 3 m of length are permitted. Streaks or longitudinal stains permitted if not over 12 mm wide, 20 cm long, or more than 4 per 3 m of length.	Spots of any color not over 19 mm in diameter or 8 per 3 m of length are permitted. Streaks or longitudinal stains permitted if not over 19 mm wide, 25 cm long, or more than 6 per 3 m of length.
Dry Fiber (Lack of Resin Fillout)	A condition in which fibers are not fully encapsulated by resin during pultrusion.	None	If internal, permitted if product meets test requirements. If on the surface, see *blooming, fiber*.	
Dullness	A lack of normal pultruded surface gloss or shine. NOTE—This condition can be caused by insufficient cure locally or in large areas, resulting in the dull band created on a pultruded part within the die when the pultrusion process is interrupted briefly (see *stop mark*).	None	Permitted unless caused by insufficient cure.	
Exposed Underlayer	The underlying layer of mat or roving not covered by surface material in a pultrusion.	None	Permitted if surfacing material covers all but 9.5 mm from each free edge but not to exceed 40 % of the width of the surface being inspected or 25 % of the perimeter of a round product. The exposed underlayment may be present intermittently along an entire length. All reinforcing fibers shall be encapsulated with resin.	Permitted if surfacing material covers all but 12 mm from each free edge but not to exceed 50 % of the width of the surface being inspected or 30 % of the perimeter of a round product.
Fiber Bridging	Reinforcing fiber material that is found bridging across on an inside radius of a pultruded shape. NOTE—This condition is caused by shrinkage stresses around such a radius during cure.	None	Permitted if reinforcing fibers are encapsulated by resin, no corner cracks exist, and there is no evidence of delamination.	
Fiber Prominence	A visible and measurable pattern of the reinforcing material on the surface of a pultruded plastic part.	None	Permitted if reinforcing material is encapsulated by resin.	
Folded Reinforcement	An unintentional or unspecified misalignment of mat or fabric reinforcing material in relation to the contour of a pultruded section.	None	Not permitted when fold results in 3 or more plies affected and a reinforcement-rich area.	Permitted if reinforcement rich area is not created and test requirements are met.